



Statistics Canada

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Questionnaire Design in a Hurry – Statistics Canada's 2011 Census Redesign

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Outline

- Overview of Canadian Census
- Census Questionnaire Development Process
- 2011 Census - Changes
- Questionnaire Redesign and Evaluation
- Test Results
- Future



Canada's Census of Population

- Every 5 years
- Household based
- Mandatory to respond
- Paper & Internet questionnaires
- Interviewer follow-up
- Two questionnaires
 - Short form (2A) - 80% of households
 - Long form (2B) - 20% of households



Census Questionnaires

- Short form (2A) - 80% households
 - Names of all household members
 - Age, Sex, Marital status, Common-law status, Language, Relationship to “person 1” (adult), Willingness to share data in future
- Data we are mandated to collect under the *Statistics Act* - population count & demographics



Census Questionnaires

- Long form (2B) - 20% households
 - Same info as the short form plus much more
 - Education (detailed), Activity limitations, Languages, Place of birth, Citizenship, Ethnicity, Labour market activities (detailed), Mobility, Income (detailed), Dwelling info, etc.

Questionnaire Development Process

- 4 year process
- Starts 5 years before Census day
- Consult stakeholders, researchers, data users, etc.
- Research questions, draft wording
- Qualitative testing
- Quantitative testing – National Census Test
- Final questionnaires 1 year before collection



2011 Census – Status in April 2010

- All plans were in place
- Short form very similar to 2006
- Long form updated and thoroughly tested
- Government decides to make long form voluntary



2011 Census Changes

- Long form is no longer part of the Census
 - Birth of the National Household Survey
- A lot of changes to sampling methodology, collection strategies, processing plans, etc.
- Minimal changes to questionnaires (at first)
- Court battle
- 3 language questions added to short form



2011 Census Questionnaires

- Long form
 - No longer part of Census
 - Now the National Household Survey
 - Questionnaire very, very similar

- Short form
 - Add 3 questions on language



2011 Census Short Form Options

- Smaller font to make it fit
- Larger paper (perhaps legal size)
- Add pages (perhaps a booklet like long form)
- Add pages (more complex fold-out)



2011 Census Short Form Limitations

- Printers
- Questions already approved
 - Wording cannot change



2011 Census Short Form Questionnaire

- Questions had all been tested (approved)
- Several instructions changed
- New multi-fold form layout
 - Risk that if not completely unfolded, respondents will miss 5 questions, including the language questions

Testing the Redesigned Questionnaire

- 3 phases of testing
 - 2 phases for the Short form paper questionnaire
 - 1 phase for the Internet questionnaire
- Phase I
 - 36 cognitive interviews in 2 cities
- Phase II
 - 48 cognitive interviews in 4 cities
- Phase II
 - 30 cognitive interviews in 2 cities

Testing the Redesigned Questionnaire

- Phase I used 2 versions of test questionnaires
 - Systematically rotated amongst interviews
- Various methods employed to catch attention
 - Side banner (in different colors)
 - Bottom banner (with & without arrows)
 - Instructions
 - Colour (background of page)
 - Colour (person labels)
 - Back page reminder to answer all questions



Results of Questionnaire Testing

- Main question – do respondents completely unfold the questionnaire?
- About 15% did not
 - All 1 or 2 person households

Results of Questionnaire Testing

- Anything outside the “border” is ignored
 - Side banner
 - Bottom banners
- Colour change helps
 - Both background of page and person labels
 - But mainly for 3+ person households
- Instruction after question 1 most useful
 - Thought of adding a symbol
 - Confirmed in phase 2 of testing





Summary

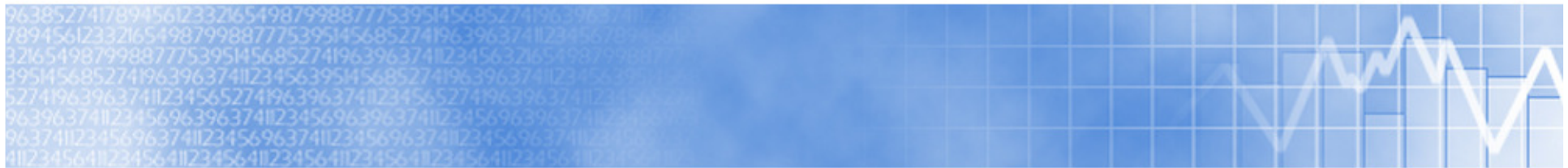
- Visual design
 - Stay within the box, particularly if coloured
 - Make important instructions look like questions
- It is possible to test a questionnaire quickly
 - Need to limit the focus of the test
 - Need a cooperative, decisive client who can prioritize, work long hours and has appropriate design tools



Future

- 2016 Census forms
 - Printing limitations gone
 - Parliament approval limitation gone
 - Still have plenty of time

But, historical comparability ...



- For more information, please contact:
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